

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAGR, PINT, UR

SUBJ: FOOD SUPPLY SITUATION

1. SOVIET SOURCES CONTINUE REPORT INSTANCES OF FOOD SHORTAGES IN VARIOUS AREAS OF COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH IN INFORMATION STARVED SOCIETY SUCH AS USSR THESE REPORTS OFTEN TEND TO BE EXAGGERATED, PERSISTENCE OF REPORTS AND LIMITED OBSERVATIONS INDICATE THAT SUBSTANTIAL AREAS OF COUNTRY EXPERIENCING AT LEAST SOME DISRUPTION IN SUPPLY OF FOOD.

2. ONE SOVIET MENTIONED THAT HE HAD HEARD FOOD SITUATION PARTICULARLY SERIOUS IN NORTH KAZAKHSTAN AND CENTRAL SIBERIAN REGIONS. HE NOTED THAT THESE AREAS HAVE EXPERIENCED SHORTAGES EVEN IN GOOD YEARS AND CONSEQUENTLY POOR HARVEST HAD PARTICULARLY HEAVY IMPACT THERE. ANOTHER SOVIET REPORTED VISITING VORONEZH ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO AND OBSERVING SERIOUS SHORTAGES OF FRESH AND PROCESSED MEATS. EVEN SAUSAGE (KOLBASA) WAS IN SHORT SUPPLY, AND LOCAL RESIDENTS TERMED POOR QUALITY SAUSAGE A REAL TREAT. ON THE OTHER HAND, SUPPLIES OF POTATOES, BREAD AND DAIRY PRODUCTS IN VORONEZH SEEMED STABLE. SOVIETS GENERALLY IN AGREEMENT THAT FOOD SHORTAGES AND RATIONING ALSO OCCURRING ALONG VOLGA AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED.

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3. SOVIETS REPORT UNUSUAL DEMAND ON MOSCOW FOOD SUPPLIES RESULTING FROM LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE COMING TO SHOP FROM OUTLYING REGIONS. MOST PEOPLE APPARENTLY BUYING LARGE QUANTITIES (TWO TO THREE KILOGRAMS) OF BUTTER SINCE THIS REPORTEDLY EXTREMELY SCARCE COMMODITY OUTSIDE MOSCOW. CHECK OF REGIONAL COMMUTER PLATFORMS OF MOSCOW TRAIN STATION MARCH 17 REVEALED EXTREMELY LARGE CROWDS OF PEOPLE HEADING FOR HOME, MANY LADEN DOWN WITH PURCHASES OF FOOD PRODUCTS.

4. ASSISTANT AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE CHECK OF TWO FARM MARKETS MARCH 17 INDICATED SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED SUPPLY OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS COMPARED WITH SITUATION ONE MONTH AGO. MEAT IN GENERALLY SHORT SUPPLY ALTHOUGH A SHARP INCREASE WAS NOTED IN QUANTITY OF VEAL ON SALE, INDICATING A POSSIBLE RISE IN SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE. IN ONE MARKET DEMAND FOR POTATOES SUBSTANTIALLY UP OVER PREVIOUS VISIT, WHILE AT OTHER MARKET GOOD QUALITY POTATOES WERE AVAILABLE AT 40 KOPEKS PER KILO WITH ONLY MODERATE DEMAND. QUALITY OF POTATOES IN STATE SUPPLY OUTLET SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW THOSE AVAILABLE IN FARM MARKETS.
DUBS

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